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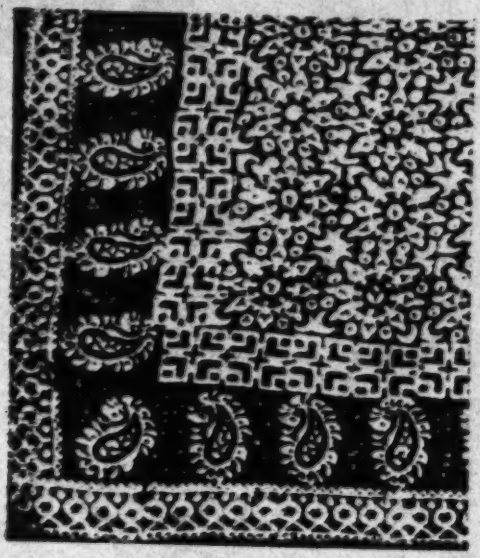

Part of a waist-cloth of Bokhara. In addition to other motives the cashmere palmette is seen. Printed silk fabric.

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ence between Sarts and Uzbegs may be regarded as obliterated. Fifteen years ago the name Sart was officially given up; since then the people who formerly bore that name have been known as Uzbegs, and the most important republic in Western Turkestan is called Uzbegistan.

In Eastern Turkestan these three peoples are represented by a few merchants only, parti-

287 yet at the same time pliable material consists of several stages. First of all the wool is spread out on the ground in a thick layer, where it is vigorously beaten with rods, a task performed by women and girls. It is then placed on a straw mat, also in an even layer, and sprayed with hot water in order to make it pliable. After that the mass is rolled up in the mat, and this roll is moved to and fro for hours until the wool has become felted. In Eastern Turkestan the Kirghiz make their yak oxen drag the roll back and forward. The felt is of the same colour as the natural wool, that is to say, white, brown, or fawn. White felt is regarded as the best of all. Patterned rugs are made by cutting out pieces of felt of contrasting colours, and arranging them on the layer of wool as desired. They are then stamped and pressed in until the whole mass becomes firmly felted together. In Western Turkestan the Kirghiz prefer angular geometrical patterns, in Eastern Turkestan undulating ribbon-like lines are more usual (see ill. p. 1460).

[531]

342 The felt made in the manner described above is so strong that the Kirghiz and other nomad peoples of Asia use it as a material for making tents; these are called alajak by the Kirghiz, kibitka in Russian, and yurt in Turk-

[See p. 75--Analyst]

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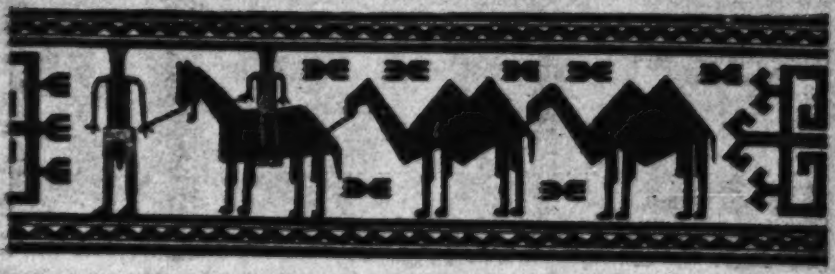

Section of a tent band (dasr-i-khirgah) which the Turkomans wrap round their tents. The pattern shows a caravan executed in the dasr-technique.

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342 ish. The Kirghiz tent may be described as a portable house (see ill. p. 1457). The frame consists of three parts, the walls, which are made of trellissed laths that can easily be folded up, the roof-frame, and a ring to which wall-frame and roof-frame are secured. The whole structure can be taken to pieces in a very short time, transported by a camel to a fresh pasture, and re-erected without great difficulty. After the framework has been set up, it is first surrounded by mats made of reeds, which bear a pattern formed by wrapping coloured threads round the stalks. These bold patterns with their angular geometrical figures are visible from afar. According to the time of the year the roof or the whole kibitka is covered with felt, which is tied down by means of cords. Against the burning heat of summer as well as the icy winter blizzards the felt kibitka affords the best protection imaginable.

287 531 Tents of similar kind are used by the Turkoman nomads. Unlike those of the Kirghiz, where the materials consist mainly of felt and leather, the Turkoman tents are characterized by the predominance of fabrics worked according to the technique of carpet-knotting.

[184] The perfection of this technique and the great variety of articles produced demonstrate the advanced stage of Turkoman civilization as compared with that of the Kirghiz. The knot-technique gives to the tent as well as to articles of daily use an artistic character which in no way impairs the mobility of the household.

Most of the rectangular Turkoman rugs were hung in the opening of the tents, where they served as substitutes for doors. None of the older pieces are larger than the moderately wide tent-openings. Some Turkoman tribes fixed a specially decorative piece, also worked in the knot-technique, above the entrance. The

7 [See p 67 -- Analyst]

287 finest examples of this kind are those made by
531 the Yomuds; they are pentagonal in shape, and are ornamented with long black fringes. From the point of view of ethnology the most interesting fabric of this kind is a strip about forty or forty-five feet long and not more than about fourteen inches wide. Such strips are called daur-i-khirgah, and are passed right round the tent. They are covered with pictorial scenes or patterns made up of conventionalized landscapes or trees, all worked on a white ground according to the knot-technique. The figural scenes show caravans on the march, laden and grazing camels, horsemen, and other scenes from the daily life of the Turkomans. It is possible that certain events from the history of the tribe or clan are represented there. Religious or magic elements may also be discerned in these friezes. Essentially similar figures are found among primitive or semi-civilized peoples all over the world, executed in the style predominant in the respective areas.

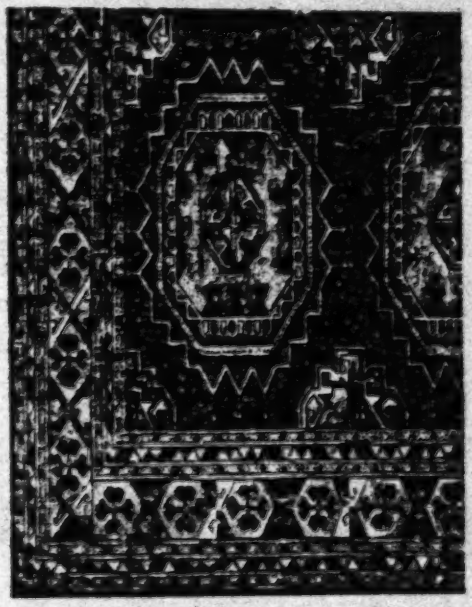
531 In the tent of the Turkomans, as in the
352 dwellings of all Islamic peoples, the floor-carpet is one of the most important items. It is very likely that the Turkomans made no distinction between ordinary rugs and prayer mats, as their carpets had no pictorial patterns, and did not, therefore, run counter to Islamic law. One very common type of rug, patterned, strangely enough, with almost cruciform figures and claw-shaped ornaments interspersed with them, certainly served both as a floor-covering and a prayer-mat. Pillows and cushions on which the Turkoman rests his arms when seated are never made in knot-technique, but always covered with cloth.

415 The fronts of the various bags and pouches which the Turkomans use as receptacles for everything, even for butter and cheese, are al-

ways knotted like carpets (see ill. p. 1461). Of these there are three principal kinds, the juval, a large camel-bag about five feet long and three feet wide, the somewhat smaller torba, and the karjin, which is carried on donkey-back. Whereas the juval and the torba, which are slung on either side of the camel, are always made in pairs, the karjin is a double pouch which is flung over the donkey's back, so that a bag hangs down on either side. These various receptacles, which take the place of cupboards or boxes, and which are used both on the march and in camp, may justly be described as textile furniture, no less so than the floor-carpet which serves the Islamic peoples both as a seat and as a bed. Turkoman carpets are distinguished from all others by their simple but vigorous beauty. All their patterns are geometrical, pictorial designs do not occur. The elements of the patterns are grouped in straight lines and at angles. Curves and circles are entirely foreign to the Turkoman style. Red, the favourite colour for women's dress, is also predominant in the carpets. All other colours are no more than accessories to red, the shade of which varies from deep purple to scarlet.

This uniformity is not only the result of a peculiar sense of style, but is also to be ex-

The characteristic design preferred by the Salor Turkomans for their textile fabrics.



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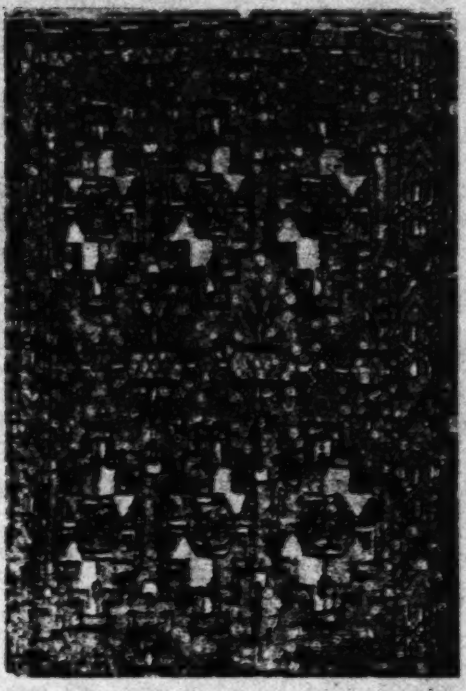

The jagged octagon, the figure found on all knotted work of the Tekke Turkomans.

287 plained by the strongly developed organiza-
531 tion of the Turkoman peoples. It is based on
186 a long tradition which is strictly observed. There are only a limited number of patterns for knotted work, each of which is the property and the distinctive badge of a certain tribe. The scope for variation is very limited, and deliberate artistic innovations do not occur. The probable reason for this is the fact that the Turkomans take a pride in proclaiming their membership of a certain tribe from afar, by the patterns of their camel-pouches when on the march, and by those of their tent-flaps when in camp. In principle this custom is not unlike that of the Scottish Highlanders to proclaim to which clan they belong by displaying its tartan in kilt and plaid.

287 In Europe Turkoman carpets—and the
531 fronts of the camel-bags, which are sold separ-
352 ately as rugs—usually go under the name of Bokhara, though not one of them was ever knotted there. In Bokhara a variation of a Persian design was used for ornamenting carpets. The name for Turkoman carpets current in the Indian carpet-trade indicates the region of Merv as their place of origin. That is correct

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in so far as the best known kinds are made by the women of the Tekke Turkomans, whose pastures are in the Merv area. Incidentally, all Turkoman carpets are made exclusively by women. Typical of the rugs of Merv is an octagonal star which is checkered red and white; the octagon is divided into four parts, each of which is in a colour contrasting to that of the adjacent part. The figures which fill the octagon are very simple and severely geometrical in style. The octagons are dispersed over the surface in even rows (see ill. p. 1459). The rugs of the Tekkes found their way to the West in large quantities; they are very popular, and have often been imitated.

The women of the Saryk tribe, which lives southward from Merv to the Afghan frontier, also use octagons as patterns, and arrange them in a manner similar to that of the Tekke rugs. There is, however, a difference in so far as the edges of these figures are not jagged. The rugs made in the southermost part of this area, known as Punjdeh (five towns), have a style of their own. They avoid red altogether, and are distinguished by a very finely graded scale of colours, in which brown and black predominate, yellow and white being used very sparingly. These dark colours form a marked contrast to the brilliant tints of all other Turkoman rugs. They correspond to the natural colour of the wool or hair used in making all Turkoman rugs. And even though these colours are often obtained artificially by dyeing, the origin of the colour scheme is doubt-

[See p. 72 -- Analyst]

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less to be sought in the use of undyed wool. The western neighbours of the Saryks are the Salors. They, too, use the octagon as the sole ornament of their knotted rugs; it is filled with hook-shaped figures on an undivided ground of even red (see ill. page 1459).

Of entirely different pattern are the rugs of the northermost Turkoman tribe, the Yomuds. They prefer scalloped figures and rows of hooks. Instead of octagons, lozenges form the ground of their rugs (see ill. page 1461).

In addition to these principal motives a number of minor ones are used, none of which are, however, of importance for the distinction of the various kinds of Turkoman rugs. Attempts have been made on more than one occasion to put some symbolic interpretation on these figures. That may be justified to a certain extent, but there can be no doubt that for some centuries at least the Turkomans have been as unconscious of the symbolic significance of these elements of designs as the Persian carpet-knotters are of that of the Buddhist symbols which they use as decorative elements. The intellectual and religious life of the early Turk peoples is far too little known to permit of anything more than surmise in this respect. Moreover, Turkestan has in the last few centuries been less accessible to foreigners that in Marco Polo's day.

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The Turkoman rugs of the best period are so closely knotted that they must from a technical point of view be classed among the best Oriental carpets. Really good rugs

1 [see cat. 116, p. 71 -- Analyst]
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2 [see cat. 116, p. 78 -- Analyst]

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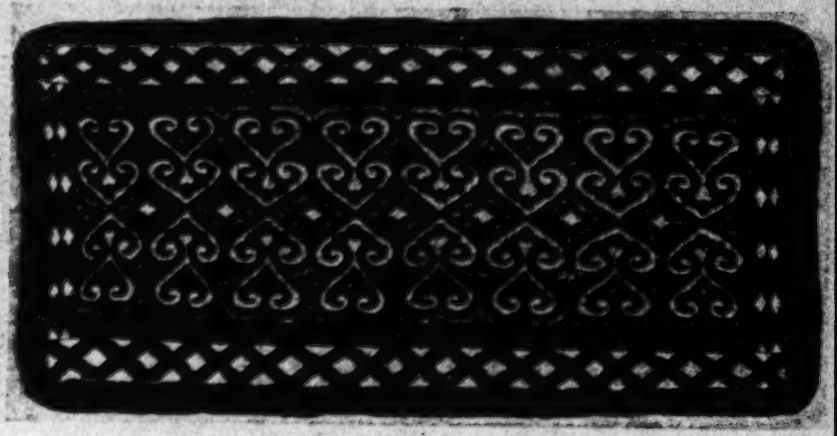
Felt rug from Eastern Turkestan with the rounded ornaments popular in that area.



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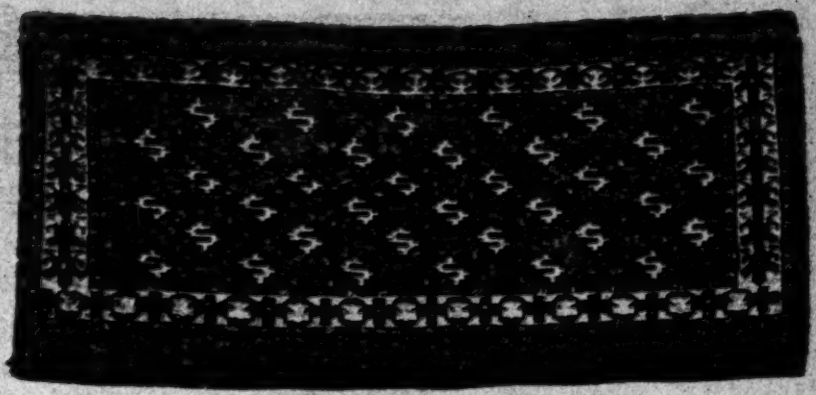

A "torba" or small camel-bag as used by the Turkomans. An early example, the pattern of which is knotted. Privately owned. New York.

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386 was also cultivated. Blue was achieved by means of indigo, which had to be brought from India, and for that reason it is rarely found in Turkoman rugs. Black was usually extracted from the gall-nuts of the pistachio (known as busgunch) and from pomegranate skins. Sometimes mate-

287 *Pattern in knot-technique as used by the Yomud Turkomans. Lozenges and rows of hooks are distributed over the background.*

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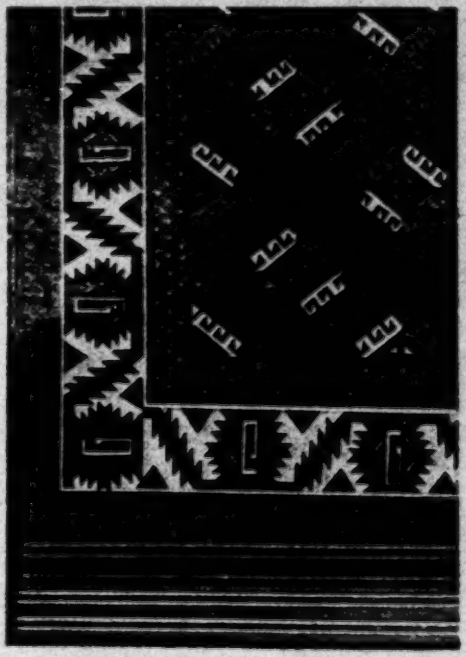

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386 rials such as pyrites were used, which had the effect of corroding the wool, so that the black parts of many otherwise good rugs give the impression of having been eaten away. In spite of the limited selection of colours the shades and the number of combinations are surprisingly 287 varied. The Turkomans are good observers, 531 and were not slow in making use of the fact that the colours varied with the time of the year at which the plants were gathered, or with the length of time during which they were allowed to boil, to ferment, or to be exposed to the rays of the sun. For that reason the simplicity which characterizes these rugs is never monotonous. Both technically and artistically they are the perfect expression of that form of life which ethnologists describe as nomadic. They fulfil all the requirements of daily use, and the patterns are designed and perpetuated by skilled workers of a tribe, whose members all live under precisely the same geographical and social conditions.

287 These connections between the knotting
352 technique and nomad life are so striking that one feels tempted to regard the craft as an invention of wandering tribes. For the town-dwellers of Persia and India, of Egypt and Asia Minor, who developed the craft of carpet-knotting into an art, the necessity to use such light and easily transportable «textile furniture» is not nearly so great, and it is but natural that they should have adopted the

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Embroidery in Turkestan

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In every moderately well-to-do house in Bokhara embroidered cloths serve as wall-coverings, the interesting patterns and brilliant colours of which immediately attract the visitor's eye. A good example of wall-coverings of this type is seen in the picture of a married couple of Bokhara, which was reproduced in Ciba Review No. 10, page 332. What makes them so attractive is the simplicity of the pattern, which, however, on closer inspection proves to be richer than at first supposed. It is embroidered on a background of unbleached cotton, which not only remains visible between the figures, but which is intended to heighten the effect of the whole.

The same artistic taste is revealed in the distribution of the pattern itself. The principal forms are usually large circular flowers dispersed over the surface of the cloth with unfailing sense of rhythm. Between them are smaller floral elements, conventionalized carnations, tulips, and irises, accompanied by twigs and garlands. In spite of its stylized character, the pattern is very vivid in its effect, an effect which owes a great deal to the brightness of the colours. The principal colour is a rich red, supplemented by many other shades of the same colour, and by green, purple, and black.

These susanis as they are called are not only made at Bokhara, but also at Samarkand, Karshi, and in other towns of Turkestan, though not always with the same discriminating artistic taste. They do not serve as wall-coverings only. Narrow strips are used to frame doorways, other pieces serve as prayer-mats, and it

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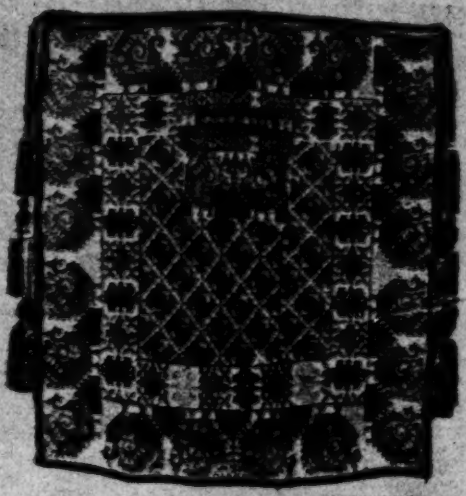

Embroidered wall-hanging of the mountain Tajiks. The figures seen in the pattern are conventionalized peacocks, and probably continue an ancient Persian tradition.

is not regarded as improper to cover the biers on which the dead are borne to rest with these colourful textiles.

These embroideries form part of a larger group which has not yet received the study it deserves. In Western Turkestan alone there are two other kinds in addition to the susanis, each of these is the heritage of a different tribe. The Turkomans made ornaments for their tents in the same technique as that of the susanis. Pentagonal pieces were embroidered by the Salors as decorations for tent-openings,

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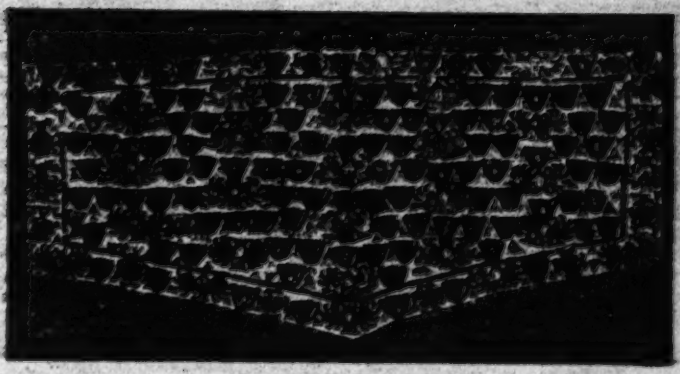

Embroidered tent ornament of the Salors which is hung above the tent-opening. The figures of the pattern are stylized flowers.

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very much like those which they knotted. It is possible that they were used for the summer tents (see ill. page 1464).[2] As is the case with all nomad work of this kind, the patterns are severely stylized. There is, however, no doubt that they are derived from floral patterns, and that the embroideries of the Salors are to be regarded as a variety of the susanis.

Hangings in the houses of the Tajiks (see ill. page 1464),[3] who inhabit the mountainous regions to the south-east of Bokhara, show patterns of a very different character. Isolated as they are in a remote area, the Tajiks have retained many characteristics of an archaic civilization (confer page 1441).[4] Among these must be numbered the embroidered fabrics made public by Count Bobrinskoi forty years ago. The principal elements in their patterns are birds arranged in pairs and in rows. They are so severely stylized that only the tufts on their heads permit of them being identified as peacocks. They represent an ancient formal tradition of the Orient, which goes back to the pre-Islamic period, and which can be traced without interruption down to the present day. In

2 [See p. 84-- Analyst]
3 [See p. 83-- Analyst]
4 [See p. 23-- Analyst]

531 [353] the remote mountain districts of Central Asia the forms have been handed down so carefully that the figure of the bird has retained traces of medieval stylization.

Embroideries discovered by Le Coq in sparsely populated districts of Eastern Turkestan are in technique and design frequently almost identical with the susanis of Bokhara. They show the same stylized flower-patterns in the same combination of colours, usually as decorations of women's trousers (tambal). It may, therefore, be assumed that the style of the susanis is characteristic of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia.

More than twenty years ago Le Coq reported that such embroidery was no longer being made in Eastern Turkestan. The examples that he saw had been made by the mothers of the generation then living. In Western Turkestan the tradition not only exists to this day, but the government has set up special workshops where the women embroider susanis. This is part of the policy by means of which the state seeks to draw women out of the secluded life of the harem.

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